

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 05828 280843Z

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SUBJ: KOREAN REACTION SEIZURE OF KYONG YANG HO BY U.S. COAST

GUARD NEAR KODIAK, ALASKA

1. ON JULY 26 VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS YUN HA-CHONG INFORMED AMBASSADOR SNEIDER OF THE US SEIZURE OF KYONG YANG HO BELONGING TO KOREA WON YANG FISHERIES COMPANY. THE VESSEL WAS TAKEN TO KODIAK FOR TRIAL FOR VIOLATING THE US-ROK FISHERIES AGREEMENT IN HAVING 50 LBS. OF DRIED CRAB MEAT, 24 CRAB LEGS, AND 20 LBS. OF FRESH CRAB MEAT ABOARD AT THE TIME OF INSPECTION BY COAST GUARD OFFICERS. (EMBOFF WAS ALSO CONTACTED BY ECONOMIC AFFAIRS BUREAU DIRECTOR, HAM TAE-HYUK, OFFICE OF FISHERIES AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES.) THE VICE MINISTER WISHED TO MAKE THREE POINTS: A. THE ROKG DEEPLY REGRETS THE VIOLATION; B. HOWEVER, IT BELIEVES THE FIRM HAD ACTED IN GOOD FAITH TO PREVENT SUCH INCIDENTS FROM OCCURRING BUT; C. IT IS THE VICTIM OF AN IN-EXPERIENCED CAPTAIN AND THREE CREW MEMBERS WHO VIOLATED COMPANY INSTRUCTIONS. THE VICE MINISTER DEPLORED THE UNFORTUNATE TIMING OF THE INCIDENT IN OCCURRING ON THE EVE OF US/ROK GIFA NEGOTIATIONS IN WASHINGTON. HE EXPRESSED THE EARNEST HOPE THAT THE VESSEL

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PAGE 02 SEOUL 05828 280843Z

WOULD BE RELEASED PROMPTLY AND THAT THE INCIDENT WOULD NOT BE

ALLOWED TO AFFECT U.S. ATTITUDES DURING THE TALKS.

2. LEE HAK SOO, PRESIDENT OF KOREA WON YANG, VISITED EMBASSY IN SOME DISTRESS TO EXPRESS HIS PROFOUND APOLOGIES AND TO ASK THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE VIOLATION BE GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION SO THAT THE VESSEL MIGHT BE RELEASED EVEN IF THE PERSONNEL INVOLVED ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE VIOLATION. ACCORDING TO LEE, THE KYONG YANG HO CARRIES 130 MEN ON BOARD, AMONG WHOM "THREE IGNORANT CREW MEMBERS" WHOM FIRM CAN IDENTIFY ACCUMULATED THE CRAB MEAT UNBEKNOWNST TO THE NEWLY HIRED CAPTAIN WHO HAD HIS HANDS FULL BECAUSE HE WAS SAILING ON HIS FIRST VOYAGE TO ALASKA. LEE SAID THAT ABOUT HALF OF THE QUANTITY OF CRAB WAS FROM THE KAMCHATKA AREA RATHER THAN FROM THE AMERICAN SHELF. HE ESTIMATED THE VALUE OF THE CRAB MEAT AS ABOUT \$200 ON THE KOREAN MARKET, AND THEREFORE HARDLY COMPARABLE TO THE \$400,000 WORTH OF POLLACK ON BOARD AS WELL AS THE VALUE OF THE SHIP. HE PROVIDED A COPY OF A LARGE POSTER WARNING CAPTAINS AND CREW IN ENGLISH AND KOREAN ON THE PROVISIONS OF THE US-ROK FISHING AGREEMENT. HE STATED THAT IT WAS POSTED IN ALL CREW SPACES AS WELL AS OFFICERS' QUARTERS. HE SAID THAT THE DETENTION OF THE VESSEL INVOLVED EXPENSES OF \$30,000 A DAY TO THE COMPANY AND THE VESSEL ITSELF IS WORTH \$10 MILLION. HE AFFIRMED THAT THE COMPANY WOULD CERTAINLY NOT JEOPARDIZE ITS INVESTMENT BY CONDONING OR COOPERATING IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FEW MEN INVOLVED WHOM HE UNDERSTOOD INTENDED THE CRAB MEAT FOR CONSUMPTION BY THEIR FAMILIES IN KOREA.

3. IN A RATHER ANXIOUS PRESENTATION EXPRESSING HIS ABSOLUTE (AND UNDOUBTEDLY GENUINE) FRUSTRATION OVER HIS EMPLOYEES' ACTIONS, HE RECALLED THAT KOREA WON YANG HAD TRIED TO COOPERATE WITH THE US IN EVERY MANNER. A FEW YEARS AGO THEY HAD EVEN PROVIDED US NAVY WITH A FIVE METER LONG SOVIET MISSILE PART WHICH THEY HAD RETRIEVED, AND RECEIVED A LETTER OF APPRECIATION. HE BELIEVED THAT THE POSSIBLE PENALTIES WHICH MIGHT BE LEVIED AGAINST THE FIRM WOULD BE COMPLETELY DISPROPORTIONATE TO THE DAMAGE DONE BY ITS EMPLOYEES AND WOULD BE COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTOOD BY THE KOREAN PUBLIC. KOREA WON YANG HAD THEREFORE REQUESTED THE KOREAN PRESS NOT TO PRINT NEWS OF THE SEIZURE IN ORDER TO AVOID RISK OF "ALIENATING" PUBLIC GOOD WILL TOWARD THE US COAST GUARD. HE CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT THE COMPANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 05828 280843Z

HAD DONE ITS BEST TO PREVENT SUCH INCIDENTS, AND ALTHOUGH IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT THE CRAB WAS TAKEN, HE WOULD HOPE THAT THE VESSEL COULD BE RELEASED AND THAT THE DETAILS COMPANY COUNSEL HAD OFFERED WOULD BE GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMISSIONER IN KODIAK.
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